



3 October 2006



## Misleading Stars & Stripes Headline

1. The headline in the 3 October 2006 Stars & Stripes Newspaper read, "Bell: USFK 'World's Worst' At Welcoming Families." I regret that the Stars & Stripes Newspaper chose to characterize my views regarding our USFK family welcoming approaches in this way. The headline is grossly misleading, taken totally out of context, and improperly characterizes my views of the totality of the really wonderful services we provide our families here in Korea.

2. On 29 September, Katie and I conducted an Area II Community Visit in Yongsan. The visit included stops at the In-processing Center, the High School to talk with Students, Army Community Services, lunch with spouses, Teen Center, BOSS, Child Development Center, and School Age Services. Each of these stops offered a heartwarming example of highly committed professionals and volunteers, all committed to making our Yongsan Community a great place to live. Katie and I were overwhelmed with the quality and focus of each of the activities, and completed the day with a great feeling of family embracement offered by our entire community.

3. One of our stops was the Army's In-processing Center. As I pointed out at the Center, it is absolutely one of the finest in-processing facilities I have seen in the Army. I was very impressed with all the programs and procedures and must say that the OIC was leading an inspired group of professionals. I was very impressed and said so. It was at this station that I observed we had not brought our spouses fully into the on-arrival in-processing process. As I articulate in our Command Policy #16, Sponsorship and In-Processing, it is very important and indeed necessary that we embrace our spouses and families on arrival in the theater. I wanted this fixed and said so. A Stars & Stripes reporter who was present noted this conversation and chose to mischaracterize in a single headline my perspective of the entire in-processing operation and for that matter our full set of family programs. Again, this headline was taken out of context and grossly misinforms the public. I am very confident that this one piece of our overwhelmingly positive family service programs at Yongsan, and indeed across the Peninsula, will be upgraded quickly.

4. I will continue to frequently engage with our communities and programs to ensure we embrace our Service Members, civilians and our families. To date, my observations across the Peninsula have been overwhelmingly positive. Our wonderful civil servants and volunteers are giving their all and making a really significant difference. I thank everyone who works so hard each day in this distant overseas assignment to bring world class services to our Service Members, civilians and families. Simply stated, you are all truly magnificent and selfless patriots.

B. B. BELL  
General, US Army  
Commander

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